

TRICARE Benefit Remains Unchanged under new Contractor

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TRICARE Management Activity

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Following the recent announcement that UnitedHealthcare Military & Veterans will replace TriWest Healthcare Alliance as the TRICARE West Region health care contractor, beneficiaries and health care providers have been asking how this change will affect them.

One thing doesn't change: the TRICARE benefit. TRICARE remains committed to providing the best possible health care for the 9.7 million military members, retirees and their families that use the benefit.

Beneficiaries currently using the TRICARE civilian health care networks are expected to find that most TriWest providers will also have agreements with UnitedHealthcare. If a provider change is needed, UnitedHealthcare will work with beneficiaries to find the right provider to ensure continuity of their health care. UnitedHealthcare shares TRICARE's commitment to provide superior service and health care to beneficiaries.

For details and the latest updates about the contract change, TRICARE Management Activity has created a website (www.tricare.mil/westtransition). By clicking the link at the top of that page, beneficiaries can sign up to receive email notifications as new information is posted to the TRICARE.mil website. Providers who visit the TRICARE website will be provided contact information for UnitedHealthcare.

During the contract transition period, TriWest continues to serve as the West Region health care contractor until the transition to UnitedHealthcare is complete beginning April 1, 2013. TRICARE's top priority is to ensure a smooth transition between UnitedHealthcare and TriWest for service members, retirees and their families.

The West Region is the last of the three regions to complete the transition to the T-3 contract. In the T-3 contract, some beneficiaries who reside 100 miles or more from an MTF or a civilian network primary care manager may not be able to continue their enrollment in TRICARE Prime. When the transition is complete, these beneficiaries may get their health care using TRICARE Standard or Extra. Standard and Extra are flexible and affordable plans giving beneficiaries a greater choice of providers with no referrals, and a waiver of cost-shares for most preventive health care services.

There is also a continued commitment to provide solutions to the unique health care market in Alaska.

UnitedHealthcare is expanding its network in Alaska and is devoted to making sure that beneficiaries there are also well served.

More details will be available as the transition moves toward completion. All beneficiaries in the West Region will receive welcome packages with information from UnitedHealthcare well ahead of the April 1, 2013 transition date.